Knoxville Journal Sept. 22, 1978

Gerald R. Ford

JFK probers unaware of plots: Ford

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former President Gerald R. Ford conceded Thursday the Warren Commission was unaware of CIA plots to kill Fidel Castro when it ruled out the possibility of a conspiracy behind John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Ford agreed that with this knowledge, the commission would have broadened the scope of its investigation. But he voiced doubt that a such an inquiry would have changed the commission's basic conclusion that Kennedy was shot to death by a lone assassin — Lee Harvey Oswald.

"Had the Warren Commission known of assassination plots directed against Castro, this might have affected the extent of the commission's inquiry," Ford told the House assassinations committee.

"It certainly would have required the commission to extend its inquiry into those operations," he added. "But I don't think they, in and of themselves, would have changed the conclusions."

Ford, one of only three still-living members of the panel set up by Lyndon B. Johnson a week after Kennedy's murder, also acknowledged that he secretly briefed an FBI official on the goings-on within the commission.

But Ford insisted that only two such contacts were made with Cartha DeLoach, a top aide to then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, and that the sessions dealt only with organizational problems involving the seven-member commission.

Ford said he stopped discussing commission business with DeLoach when the panel moved into the investigative phase of its work.